

# STAFF SUMMARY SHEET

	TO	ACTION	SIGNATURE (Surname), GRADE AND DATE		TO	ACTION	SIGNATURE (Surname), GRADE AND DATE
1	DFM_	sig	(sig) <i>Col 15 Nov 12</i> Col Andrew Armacost	6			
2	DFER	approve	<i>Have Col 25 Jan 13</i>	7			
3	DFM_	action	Dr. David A. Levy	8			
4				9			
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SURNAME OF ACTION OFFICER AND GRADE

SYMBOL

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INITIALS

SUSPENSE DATE

Levy, AD-24

DFM\_

333-9710

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SUBJECT

Clearance for Material for Public Release

USAFA-DF-PA- *B12*

DATE

20121113

## SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE. To provide security and policy review on the document at Tab 1 prior to release to the public.

## 2. BACKGROUND.

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Title: Giving Voice to Values and Ethics Across the Curriculum at the U.S. Air Force Academy

Circle one: Abstract    Tech Report    Journal Article    Speech    Paper    Presentation    Poster

Thesis/Dissertation

Book

Other: Invited book chapter

Description: This invited book chapter summarizes our use of a Giving Voice to Values exercise in MGT 400. This work does not include classified information, national security information or policy statements.

Release Information: Educating for Values-Driven Leadership Across the Curriculum: Giving Voice To Values book

Previous Clearance information: (If applicable)

Recommended Distribution Statement:

(Distribution A, Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.)

## 3. DISCUSSION.

## 4. VIEWS OF OTHERS.

5. RECOMMENDATION. Department Head or designee reviews as subject matter expert. DFER reviews for policy and security. Coordination indicates the document is suitable for public release. Suitability is based on the document being unclassified, not jeopardizing DoD interests, and accurately portraying official policy [Reference DoDD 5230.09]. Release is the decision of the originator (author). Compliance with AFI 35-102 is mandatory.

*DA Levy*  
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Professor

1 Tab  
1. book chapter

## **Giving Voice to Values and Ethics Across the Curriculum at the U.S. Air Force Academy<sup>1</sup>**

In the Fall of 2011, one of the authors of this chapter received an e-mail from a member of the U.S. Air Force Academy's Center for Character and Leadership Development. The e-mail was a request for U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) faculty members to pair up with distinguished faculty from other institutions during an upcoming National Character and Leadership Symposium hosted by USAFA. The author was asked to pair up with Mary Gentile, the creator of the *Giving Voice to Values* curriculum. Since USAFA understands the importance of values driven leadership, has ethics training deeply embedded into its curriculum in multiple areas based on its foundational core value of integrity, and even has its own center for character and leadership development, the author was a bit skeptical about what value this pairing could bring. It turns out that the pairing was fortuitous in that the *Giving Voice to Values* program provides an important addition to USAFA's curriculum. The following chapter provides insight into the uniqueness of the military environment, the importance of values driven leadership, and how the U.S. Air Force Academy uses *Giving Voice to Values* to enhance its curriculum and meet its mission, "To educate, train and inspire men and women to become leaders of character, motivated to lead the United States Air Force in service to our nation."

### ***The military environment and the importance of values driven leadership***

Most organizations claim to be unique, and often are unique to some extent, but military organizations exhibit characteristics that just are not found in Corporate America. Military leaders send their subordinates into battle. A commander may say to a soldier, "I want you to take that hill, the enemy will be shooting at you, and you will likely die." And the soldier will

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<sup>1</sup> *The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force Academy, Air Force, Department of Defense, or the US Government.*



take the hill. Military commanders must be able to fully control subordinate behavior and, with rare exceptions, they do. They demand almost complete obedience from their subordinates.

To make such obedience possible, the military is carefully engineered to make insubordination unlikely even when orders are questionable. The first step/component to ensuring that orders are followed occurs in basic training. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) describe different types of training and the type of behavior each type yields. Investiture training is particularly powerful, and basic training is often used to describe it. A recruit's individual identity is torn down and the recruit is "rebuilt" as best suits the military organization. An interesting description of this can be found in a newspaper article entitled, "Welcome to the Air Force Academy. You're doing everything wrong!" by Daniel Terdiman ([http://news.cnet.com/8301-13772\\_3-10273555-52.html](http://news.cnet.com/8301-13772_3-10273555-52.html)) . The training has been shown to increase both organizational commitment and cohesion. Additionally, military recruits learn to do what they are told and to not question authority. In fact, when questioned by an underclassman, basic and freshman cadets at the United States Air Force Academy must respond with one of the following basic responses: 1) Yes, sir! (or Ma'am, as appropriate), 2) No, sir! 3) No excuse, sir! 4) Sir, may I ask a question? 5) Sir, may I make a statement? 6) Sir, I do not understand! or 7) Sir, I do not know! From our experience we know that the 4th response, "Sir, May I ask a question?" often yields a "No!" as an answer. One learns very quickly that disobeying or questioning authority is not an option.

During training, and reinforced after, recruits learn of Article 92: Failure to Obey Order or Regulation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). According to the code, the maximum punishment for failing to obey an order or regulation is, "(1) *Violation or failure to obey lawful general order or regulation.* Dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and

allowances, and confinement for 2 years. (2) *Violation of failure to obey other lawful order.* Bad-conduct discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for 6 months.” Of course, there is good reason to create an organizational system whereby rules are followed to a fault. Much of what the military does during time of war is not pleasant, yet needs to be done. Having a military force follow their orders without question is essential and necessary.

The willingness to do what one is told extends to mere suggestions by superiors. In classroom discussions with recent U.S. Air Force Academy graduates, we often hear stories about colonels suggesting that young lieutenants take on a task, and thinking that it was only a suggestion and not an order, find themselves under fire for not doing what they were told. It turns out that “suggestions” by high ranking officers are tantamount to orders.

Due to the extreme pressure to do what one is told, incidents have occurred where unlawful orders were followed causing great harm. One example is the My Lai Massacre where Lt. Calley gave an unlawful order to his soldiers to shoot noncombatant Vietnamese villagers and, unfortunately, they did. Consequently, military members are now trained on what constitutes a lawful order and of their obligation to not follow unlawful orders. *Giving Voice to Values* falls right in line with this and could easily be incorporated into required training on lawful orders.

Also in line with the mission and purpose of *Giving Voice to Values* is the U.S. Military’s focus on its core values, particularly integrity. All of the U.S. Military branches include integrity as one of their primary core values. Like the need to obey, it is critical that military members conduct themselves with integrity. Lives truly are at stake and everyone is aware of this.

So, *Giving Voice to Values* may be useful for military leaders and teachers to use to bridge the gap for military members between obeying the rules and commands of their leaders and the need to speak up when they sense breaches of integrity.

### ***Ethics Curriculum***

One primary purpose of ethics training at USAFA is to help cadets internalize the U.S. Air Force's core values: Integrity First, Service before Self, Excellence in all We Do. At the U.S. Air Force Academy, we have a Cadet Development Directorate charged with providing character development training to each academic class. Each class receives eight hours of training each of their four years at USAFA. The workshop for freshman, Vital Effective Character Through Observation and Reflection (VECTOR), focuses on personal growth and values through reflection. Sophomores attend a workshop called Respect and Responsibility (R&R) where they gain insight into themselves and learn to develop effective interpersonal relationships that help create healthy command environments. Juniors attend Leaders in Flight Today (LIFT) where one of the key topics is moral courage. Academy Character Enrichment Seminar (ACES) is for seniors and focuses on leading ethically as an Air Force officer.

(<http://www.usafa.edu/Commandant/cwc/cwcx.cfm?catname=cwc>)

In addition to the series of ethics training workshops and seminars, USAFA emphasizes the importance of ethics throughout its academic curriculum. Courses in the curriculum are tied to USAFA's Educational Outcomes (<http://www.usafa.edu/df/data/USAFA%20Outcomes.pdf>), two of which focus on ethics – commitment to the “professional and individual responsibility of ethical reasoning and action,” and the knowledge of “ethics and the foundation of character.” Courses are sequenced so that students' experience and academic coursework leads to the course of instruction in subsequent courses. Our course, Management and Command, is taken by



students in their senior year and preceded by courses in behavioral sciences and leadership and philosophy. Specifically, Management and Command:

“introduces students to the complex and dynamic nature of the world in which Air Force officers operate. Through content that is linked to systems theory, this interactive course focuses on the successful techniques that allow officers to understand and influence their environment. Using various models and processes, cadets will explore the interrelationships of power and the context within which it occurs. Students will gain insights into how to make decisions for situations that involve complexity and uncertainty. The tools are applied to both military and non-military scenarios, with an emphasis on the transition from the cadet role to the role of an officer. In addition, this course is a primary contributor to the development and assessment of the following USAFA outcomes: Responsibilities – Lifelong Development and Contributions, Skills – Decision Making, and Knowledge – Ethics and the Foundations of Character.” (copied from the USAFA Curriculum Handbook 2012-2013, p. 308)

Its prerequisite courses are: 1) Foundations for Leadership and Character Development which:

“explores leadership development through both academic study and applied exercises. Specifically, the course examines individual leader development principles that will set students on a lifelong path of becoming a leader of character who treats others with respect and dignity. The academic study of leadership development will be combined with experiential exercises, case studies, and student projects designed to help students develop in their own leadership capacity. In addition, this course is a primary contributor to the development and assessment of the following USAFA outcomes: Responsibilities – Respect for Human Dignity and Lifelong Development and Contributions.” (copied from the USAFA Curriculum Handbook 2012-2013, p. 238)

and is taught by the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership, and 2) Ethics which is:

“A critical study of several major moral theories and their application to contemporary moral problems with special emphasis on the moral problems of the profession of arms. Highlighted are the officer’s responsibilities to reason and act ethically; develop critical thinking skills; know civic, cultural, and international contexts in which the U.S. military operates; and learn influential normative theories about ethics and the foundations of character. In addition, this course is a primary contributor to the development and assessment of the following USAFA outcomes: Responsibilities – Ethical Reasoning and Action, Skills – Critical Thinking, and Knowledge – Civic, Cultural, and International Environments, and Ethics and the Foundation of Character.” (copied from the USAFA Curriculum Handbook 2012-2013, p. 333)

and is taught by the Department of Philosophy. Thus, students enter our course with a strong academic foundation and understanding of the moral theories underlying ethical behavior and motivation to become a military professional dedicated to integrity and respect for human dignity. We also emphasize the Department of Management's commitment to providing a safe environment for our students to express their beliefs through our Human Relations Climate

Policy:

“As a member of this class, you are expected to “show and receive respect for all people regardless of their race, religion, gender, national origin, color, or status.” Such respect specifically precludes any type of harassment, inappropriate comments, or hostile environment. We expect the climate in all DFM classrooms to be professional at all times and we expect you to do your part in making this happen.”

The policy goes on to advise students to contact their instructor, other professors of the department that are designated Climate Advocates, or the Department Head if they feel uncomfortable or have concerns about classroom discussions and appears on all Department of Management syllabi. However, even with this commitment to foster an environment conducive to students' expressions related to ethics, and as can happen in any course discussing personal decisions and behavior related to ethics, broaching students' beliefs and behavior can be awkward.

*Giving Voice to Values* provides our faculty in the Management and Command course a mechanism for discussing students' choices in addressing ethical issues. At the same time, it provides our students an opportunity and context to discuss potentially sensitive issues. From studies of bystanders and the social proof literature, we can see that it is difficult to take “correct” action when in the presence of a crowd. *Giving Voice to Values*, when presented in a class setting, gives students the experience of voicing values while in the presence of peers who may



not share their viewpoint. In several instances, it took one brave student to raise their hand and announce they would confront and challenge an ethically dubious position. Once this happened, several other students would join the initial student in agreement to that course of action.

***Specific examples of a GVV-style exercise.***

Although we used aspects of *Giving Voice to Values* throughout our course, we designated one lesson to have an explicit focus on it. This lesson occurred after we introduced some major themes of the course, including sensemaking, systems thinking and design, and organizational culture. We specifically introduced *Giving Voice to Values* in order to reframe these discussions with an ethical perspective.

During this lesson we incorporated the paper Dr. Gentile wrote in conjunction with her visit to the Air Force Academy for the February, 2012 National Character & Leadership Symposium Scholars forum. The reading focused on the tension between authority and autonomy, and Gentile believes this tension might be particularly evident in military contexts. This formed the basis for the in-class discussion which generated a few themes, and, although anecdotal, are informative.

Theme 1: the cadets here are regularly exposed to a variety of ethics education from several different sources, as previously described. Most in our class identified with “ethics fatigue”, a feeling Dr. Gentile referred to in her paper, which emerges from an ethics education pedagogy that is generally abstract and deals with mostly ethical reasoning, theory, and grand dilemmas that are not often encountered in the day-to-day existence of cadets (Gentile, 2012). Reflecting this idea, the general feeling among our students initially seemed to be along the lines of “oh no, not another ethics lesson.”



Theme 2: Students see a ‘disconnect’ between theoretical bright lines in academic situations and contextually based grey areas in their actual experiences. They feel that much of what is presented to them does not prepare them for the challenging situations they expect to encounter in “real life”.

Theme 3: The authority-autonomy tension is real, and there is a strong desire to have autonomy and act as a self-governing agent in these challenging situations. Many students commented that despite the Air Force Academy being a self-labeled “Leadership Laboratory”, most often the structure of the system and the detailed instructions concerning activities limited, if not eliminated, chances to express autonomous leadership.

As a practical application to reinforce the discussion and emergent themes, we had the students separate into groups of four and complete the “A Tale of Two Stories” exercise from Gentile (2010). This particular lesson asks students to contrast a time when their values conflicted with a situation and they did not speak up with a time when they had conflict and they did speak up. This retrospective exercise could be somewhat risky for a cadet because of the honor code they live under, which has a no toleration clause<sup>2</sup>. The course instructors framed these situations as those times when rules were being violated, but no honor code violations were present. We wanted to avoid a potential situation where a cadet might inadvertently implicate himself or herself of tolerating an honor violation.

Beyond the general themes presented earlier, instructors noted common responses during the exercise. In particular, students indicated they were motivated to speak up when they had low toleration for the act they witnessed and/or empathy for the person who was the victim of the

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<sup>2</sup> USAFA Honor Code: "We Will Not Lie, Steal Or Cheat, Nor Tolerate Among Us Anyone Who Does" (<http://www.usafa.af.mil/information/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=9427>)

act or when they witnessed unlawful behavior. Students were less likely to speak up when the person committing the act was a friend, had higher military rank than they did, or they felt their speaking up would have no impact on the situation or the probability of its future occurrence. Students expressed great satisfaction when they spoke up in contrast to dissatisfaction when they chose to not speak up. The circumstances or conditions that would have made speaking up easier for students included having more personal courage/confidence to speak up and not caring what others think about speaking up in alignment with their personal values.

We followed up the *Giving Voice to Values* lesson with a lesson reviewing the Milgram Studies and the Stanford Prison Experiments. Many students had previously seen these well-known studies, but we encouraged them to use the new *Giving Voice to Values* lens to interpret their meaning. We asked the students if they had different views of how our need to fulfill roles or obey authority affects the desire and ability to speak up in unethical situations.

In addition to in-class discussions, we also ask students to prepare personal journals on several lessons to reflect on course topics that might allow them to see their daily experience from a different perspective. Many students chose to reflect on the meaning of the *Giving Voice to Values* lesson in this way.

### ***Conclusion***

The U.S. Air Force Academy's mission is "to educate, train and inspire men and women to become leaders of character, motivated to lead the United States Air Force in service to our nation," and faculty and staff take this mission very seriously. The stakes are too high to do otherwise. Even though ethics training has been embedded into every aspect of a cadet's education and training, we found that the *Giving Voice to Values* program is a great addition to that curriculum and does an excellent job of helping cadets deal with the tension between



authority and autonomy that sometimes exists in organizations that require a high level of obedience along with a need to voice their values when necessary.

#### References:

Gentile, M.C. (2010). *Giving Voice to Values: How to Speak Your Mind When You Know What's Right*. Yale University Press: New Haven.

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